

## **Mosby's Rangers: Lessons in Intelligence and Special Operations Chronology**

1833, John Singleton Mosby is born in Powhatan County, Virginia.

1861-1862: Mosby enlists in the Confederate Army and serves as an adjutant and scout under cavalry commander J.E.B. Stuart.

21 April 1862: Confederate government passes the Partisan Ranger Act granting statutory authority to raise and operate irregular military units.

29/30 December 1862: At Oakham, near Middleburg, Mosby is given his first independent command under General Stuart. Mosby is a direct report to Stuart until his death and thereafter to General Lee.

26 January 1863: Mosby and the Rangers capture 2 mounted Union sentries at Frying Pan Meeting House and 10 pickets at the "Old Chantilly Church" belonging to the 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry.

11 February 1863: Laura Ratcliffe, a Mosby source, learns from a Union soldier that Federal troops are setting a trap to capture Mosby in the Frying Pan area and warns him near the present day Worldgate Center.

26 February 1863: Mosby's Rangers surprise encamped Pennsylvania cavalry at Thompson's Corner (West Ox and Thompson Road), causing most of them to flee.

2 March 1863: At Aldie Mill, Mosby and a small detachment of Rangers attack and overwhelm larger force of Vermont Cavalry numbering 59 men, part of Sir Percy Wyndham's command.

8 March 1863: Mosby stops for lunch at the home of Lorman Chancellor in Middleburg before the raid on Fairfax Courthouse.

8 March 1863: Mosby gathers 29 Rangers at Dover's Crossroads to conduct the raid to capture Wyndham at Fairfax Courthouse.

8/9 March 1863: Mosby and 29 men ride through Union lines into Fairfax Courthouse area and capture Brig. Gen. Edwin Stoughton.

17 March 1863: Mosby and 40 Rangers emerge out of the woods at Herndon Railroad Station and capture most of the Union pickets stationed near there.

23 March 1863: Mosby and a group of Rangers emerge from the woods near Chantilly Plantation and attack a Union picket along the Little River Turnpike. They are pursued west by a Union force and then ambush them near Saunder's Gate (present day corner of US-50 and Centreville Road).

2 April 1863: Mosby and a 65-man detachment are surprised while bivouacked without security at Miskel's farm in present day Sterling by a Vermont cavalry force of 200-plus men. They respond aggressively and counterattack to rout the larger force.

30 May 1863: After a successful train raid at Catlett Station, Mosby and the Rangers try to hold off a large Union cavalry force pursuing them. The Rangers use a cannon on a hilltop near present-day Vint Hill Farms. Trying to fight conventionally and defend the position proves a mistake and a deviation from Mosby's successful tactics and principles of war. Mosby loses 20 men killed, wounded, and captured, including a skilled British soldier of fortune Capt. Bradford Smith Hopkins who later dies.

10 June 1863: Mosby appoints the officers of Company A in Rector's Crossroads (present-day Atoka) as his Rangers became regularized (listed as an official unit of the CSA military force)—at least in name.

17 June 1863: prior to the Battle of Gettysburg, Mosby meets with Stuart at Beveridge House, the present-day Red Fox Inn, in Middleburg where he provides intelligence on Union forces and coordinates plans to support Stuart's cavalry in the up-coming campaign. Mosby's Rangers do not participate in the Battle of Gettysburg that follows (1-3 July).

16 October 1863: Mosby and seven of his men follow behind a Union wagon train moving west along the Little River Turnpike without an armed escort. They ambush the wagon train near the present-day Chantilly Library.

1 January 1864: Capt. William Smith and 30 Rangers gather in Rectortown and ambush 77 troopers, from the 1st Potomac Home Brigade of Maryland Cavalry (Cole's Cavalry) passing through Five Points as they hunted for Mosby.

9 January 1864: Mosby and scout Frank Stringfellow conduct the "Loudoun Heights Raid," on a Maryland cavalry unit encamped on a peak overlooking Harper's Ferry. The nighttime raid results in friendly fire casualties. While regarded by Mosby as a defeat, Generals Stuart and Lee see it as a useful measure to keep up the pressure on Union forces.

22 February 1864: Mosby conducts an effective "L-Shape" ambush of a company-size Union patrol from the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry and 16th New York Cavalry at Sugarland Run Creek on modern Route 7.

6 July 1864: Mosby and his men surprise Maj. William Forbes and a 150-man-strong force of New York and Massachusetts cavalry hunting for him near Mt. Zion Church north of Aldie. Mosby used a cannon in the engagement.

18 October 1864: Rangers led by Capt. Richard Montjoy enter Falls Church to capture horses. They take the pro-Union Rev. John Read (Reed) prisoner for allegedly sounding an alarm and being a spy. The Rangers execute Reed and one other man near Piney Branch Creek close to Hunter Mill Road in an action that many will later judge an atrocity and violation of the rules of warfare characteristic of irregular warfare in the conflict.

6 November 1864: In retaliation for the execution of seven Rangers by units under Union cavalry commander Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan, Mosby's Rangers assemble 27 captured Michigan cavalrymen and have them draw lots for execution near the Rectortown warehouse site. Seven lots are drawn, but only three soldiers are killed as some escape and others survive the execution attempt. Mosby intended this act as a message to Union forces that such executions would be reciprocal unless stopped altogether by both sides.

18 November 1864: The 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron of Mosby's Rangers under the command of Capt. Adolphus "Dolly" Richards, locates and then annihilates the Union Army counter-guerrilla unit, Blazer's Scouts, in West Virginia.

28 November 1864: 5,000 Union cavalry from Sheridan's 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, led by Brevet Maj. Gen. Wesley Merritt, enter Loudoun County for the "Great Burning Raid" to destroy Mosby's logistic base of support among the populace.

21 December 1864: Mosby and another Ranger are discovered while having dinner at Lakeland, near present-day Atoka, by Union cavalry. Mosby is shot and seriously wounded. He is left for dead by Union soldiers after he uses a "cover story" claiming to be someone else. He is out of action until late February 1865.

January 1865: Mosby receives promotion to full Colonel with the effective date of rank of 7 December 1864. The Rangers become a regiment.

7 March 1865: Mosby's Rangers ambush a 20-man detachment from the 16th New York Cavalry on patrol near the present-day Oakton Methodist Church.

6 April 1865: Capt. George Baylor of Mosby's Rangers defeats the Union Loudoun Rangers near Harper's Ferry, West Virginia.

21 April 1865: Mosby disbands the Rangers at Salem (now Marshall) two weeks after Lee's surrender at Appomattox.

1867-1876: Mosby returns to his law practice at Brentmoor in Warrenton before entering US Government service and various business ventures.

30 May 1916: Mosby passes away and is buried in the Warrenton Cemetery.